I've been travelling New Zealand for the past month and during my time here I've participated in a few Lord of the Rings tours. I figured I'd have a bit of fun this week to see if I could match some Western Conference players to some of the characters from Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Before that, a different type of Maaasquito Buzzings for this week...
Leaders in the past week who are under 50% owned in Yahoo leagues:

Goals

Assists

PIMs

SOG

Moreau (3)

Huselius (5)

Crombeen (19)

Cole (17)

Lindstrom (3)

Lombardi (4)

Dorsett (18)

Lombardi (17)

Cole (3)

Murray (4)

Barker (17)

Moss (16)

Pavelski (3)

Gilbert (3)

Davison (17)

Pavelski (14)

Stewart (2)

Brodziak (3)

Ivanans (17)

O' Sullivan (13)

And now onto the LOTR,

We'll start off with the grey wizard himself, Gandalf. Gandalf sacrificed himself at the end of the first Lord of the Rings movie, and returned to save the day in the second instalment. That seems fitting for the situation involving Mats Sundin. Sundin retired at the end of last season, but recently re-signed with the Canucks, which could represent his second-coming in the NHL. Whether or not he helps the Sedins triumph over evil is another story, but the career point-per-game player should enjoy a Gandalf-like rejuvenation while playing in Vancouver. He has three points in six contests since joining the Canucks, but should improve upon that scoring pace once he gets into mid-season game shape after the All-Star break.

The leader of the Flames and possible captain of Team Canada in the 2010 Olympics is Jarome Iginla, so it's fitting that Aragorn's role goes to him. Iggy has 18 goals and 33 assists in 45 contests so far this season, which would prorate to 93 points over a course of a full 82 game season. He has back-to-back seasons of 90 points or more, so making it three in-a-row would certainly be a feat. His 25 PIMs, 41 hits and 3.53 shots per game average not only demonstrate a strong leadership quality but a self-sacrificing mentality as well. His 5:04 power-play minutes per game average shows that the coaching staff has complete faith in the Flames captain, thus making Iggy a perfect fit for Aragorn.

Loui Eriksson has been on fire this season, connecting at a rate of 21.6 percent this season. His high-accuracy rate makes him the perfect candidate as Legolas. Although his shooting percentage is a bit high, it can be justified due to his increased offensive role in the Stars line up. This season his 2.31 shots on goal per game average is much higher compared to his career average of 1.74, so look for those points to keep piling on, just like Legolas kill rate in the trilogy.

Boromir always seemed to have a negative influence towards the “good guys”, which is why Brad Boyes and his minus-23 rating could be a perfect union. Although Boromir, on the most part, was a negative influence throughout the trilogy, he did have one redeeming quality when he “took one for the team” before his death. Boyes’ one redeeming quality would be his 12 power-play goals on the season. Owning Boyes is a double-edged sword, if you can stomach the harsh plus/minus, owning those power-play goals could do wonders for your fantasy squad.

Gimili had a gungho spirit as he almost always charged into all battle situations with full steam throughout the trilogy. So it would seem fitting that the 213 pound, 5’11” Cal Clutterbuck fits the mould. Clutterbuck is ranked third in the league in terms of total hits at 160, but is the league leader in terms of hits per contest at 4.00 per game. His strong physical play definitely mirrors the tiny dwarven warrior.

Jonathan Cheechoo seems to have a split personality, he tallied five points in four games at the end of December, but then started January with a three game point-less streak. He seems to be the perfect fit for Gollum/Smeagol, as you just don’t know when the evil side is going to rear its ugly head. If you are brave enough to take a gamble on Cheechoo, hopefully Gollum shows up more than Smeagol in the second half of this season.

Merry and Pippin belong to two Shark blue-liners because of their “assisting” nature. Dan Boyle and Marc-Edouard Vlasic have combined for a total of 26 assists for the Sharks on the power-play this season. They are one of the main reasons why the Sharks power-play have been producing at an awesome 23.6% this season. Look for them to assist Frodo and Sam to the Promised Land this season.

Frodo and Sam also hail from the Sharks’ squad. Joe Thornton and Patrick Marleau have shown plenty of chemistry this season and have proven to be the best dynamic duo in the Western Conference heading into the All-Star game. The Sharks’ pairing have combined for a total of 102 points, 233 shots on goal, plus 42 rating and 46 PIMs in 44 games this season. JT and Marleau will definitely face immense pressure from Shark fans as they embark upon their journey for the shiny, sparkly ring at the end of the season.

To finish it off, Marian Gaborik is the evil Saruman. Owning Gabby on a fantasy squad is just plain evil. He’ll toy with your emotions (and patience) before dropping the bomb of a 1000 orcs on top of your fantasy squad. Just ask the many owners that spent an early pick on Gabby for their team this season. Mental note for next year, don’t draft Gabby.